

Waste and Recycling Strategy 2018 - 2023

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennifer Shepherd, Head of Environment and Public Realm Elizabeth Hazell, Environmental Improvement Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

Following previous consultation with the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee and a workshop with Members, a new Waste and Recycling Strategy has been drafted for approval. The proposed Strategy (Appendix 1) aims to align the Council's aspirations with its appetite for significant service changes.

The proposed Strategy focuses on achieving high quality recycling with a specific focus on the four target materials; Plastic, glass, paper & card and metals. The national picture is also taken into account with consideration for the reduction in single-use plastics, the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme and the instability in the international markets.

The new 5 year Strategy will also enable the Council to take a more considered approach to the retendering of the Mid Kent Waste Contract and ensure future services offer the most cost effective solution for the Kent taxpayer.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy 2018 – 2023, as set out in Appendix 1, is adopted and the actions contained within it are implemented.

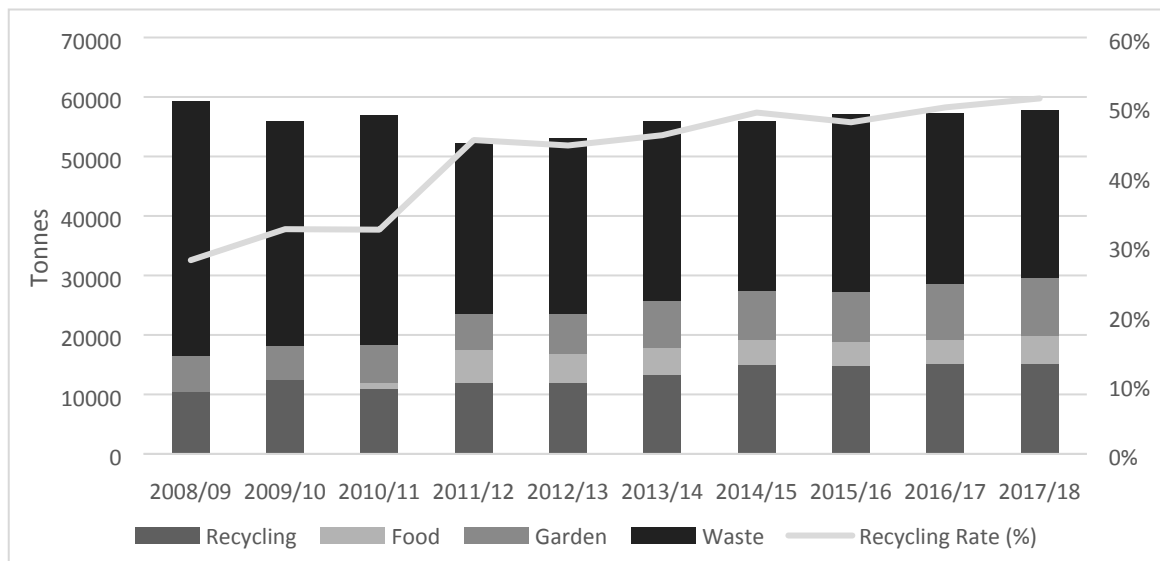
Timetable

Meeting	Date
Corporate Leadership Team	Tuesday 3 July 2018
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	Tuesday 17 July 2018

Waste and Recycling Strategy 2018 - 2023

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Maidstone Borough Council adopted its first waste and recycling strategy in 2010 to ensure the Services had a clear vision and stretching targets. Since then Maidstone has been at the forefront of service innovation in Kent and the Borough's performance has continued to rise significantly to over 50%.



1.2 The graph above shows the significant increase in recycling rate in 2011/12 when the Council introduced the weekly food waste service and fortnightly refuse collections. Since then the recycling rate has continued to increase slowly despite further enhancements to the recycling service, such as the inclusion of glass and the separate textile collections. Over the past 4 years the mixed recycling collections have remained static however small increases in garden waste and food waste have contributed to the slight increase in performance overall.

1.3 The gross cost for the household waste and recycling service is just under £4 million per year, which equates to almost 10% of the Council's gross budget. The services also generate over £1.3 million income to support the service delivery costs. This includes garden waste subscriptions, bulky waste income and disposal benefits from Kent County Council.

1.4 In 2017, a review of the existing Waste Strategy identified that the challenging targets could not be delivered without a more ambitious approach to service delivery. Therefore it was decided by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to explore future options and determine the Council's appetite for more contentious service changes such as three-weekly collections.

1.5 A Member workshop considered the national and local picture with input from the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) and the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP). The workshop considered what service

changes would be required to achieve higher recycling rates and at what level these would be acceptable.

- 1.6 The feedback strongly supported the maintenance of current performance and alternative collection frequencies, for example three or four-weekly collections, were deemed unacceptable at the present time. It was noted that without implementing significant and potentially unpopular service changes to drive up performance, the Borough's recycling rate is unlikely to rise far beyond 50%.
- 1.7 Alongside these local considerations, there are a number of challenges nationally which are impacting recycling performance and the stability of the recycling markets. It is important that Maidstone's waste and recycling strategy takes this into consideration and seeks to deliver a cost effective solution for the Kent taxpayer.
- 1.8 Waste reduction, particularly relating to single-use plastics, has also risen up the Government's agenda and new legislation is expected this year to impose bans and levys on specific materials. At the moment it is unclear how these proposals will impact local collections and targets, however it is important that Maidstone has an input into any changes and takes a proactive approach to their implementation.
- 1.9 Maidstone's waste and recycling services are currently provided through the Mid Kent Waste Contract by Biffa Municipal Ltd. There are five years remaining of this contract before the services will need to be retendered. Whilst services can be changed during the contract term, there is more flexibility as part of a new contract. Therefore the next five years provide an opportunity to explore alternative delivery models and ways to maximise the quality of recycling collected. Since the current contract was tendered, costs have increased significantly and therefore it is essential that action is taken to prevent a substantial increase in the contract value.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council could decide to adopt a new waste strategy with a clear vision which takes into account the uncertainty in the recycling markets and focuses on the target materials which have the greatest impact on our environment. The intention of this strategy would be to prepare the Council for a new waste contract in 2023 and enable difficult decisions to be considered in order to minimise the cost to the Kent taxpayers.
- 2.2 A draft strategy has been prepared (Appendix 1) which includes the following vision for the services:

For Maidstone Borough to be at the forefront of the national drive towards eliminating unnecessary waste, particularly single-use plastics and empowering our residents to live more sustainably and actively engage in the delivery of innovative waste reduction, recycling and collection services

The Council could decide to adopt this Strategy and the objectives set out within it.

- 2.3 Alternatively the Council could decide not to implement its own waste and recycling strategy and continue to operate a “business as usual” service which does not attempt to deliver an improvement to the current performance. Whilst current performance is greater than the national target, this is unlikely to be maintained without ongoing engagement with residents. With the ongoing instability in the recycling markets, failure to achieve good quality recycling will have a financial implication to the Kent taxpayer as the material value declines. The lack of a waste and recycling strategy is likely to result in an inconsistent and disjointed approach to waste management and the Council will not be prepared for retendering the Services.
 - 2.4 The Council could decide to set a more ambitious strategy delivering significant improvements to performance through the implementation of service changes. In order to achieve higher recycling levels it would be necessary to further restrict the amount of non-recyclable refuse collected in order to drive continued behavioural change. This would need to be through a reduction in collection frequency or bin capacity. Whilst this has been implemented elsewhere in the Country, feedback from the workshop suggested this was not palatable in Maidstone at the current time. However the Council could decide to reconsider this and include this option within the Strategy for the next five years.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The preferred option is to adopt the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy 2018 – 2023 as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 This draft Strategy considers both the national and local context and matches the Council’s aspirations with its appetite for implementing potentially unpopular service changes.
- 3.3 The Strategy continues to focus on waste reduction as well as high quality recycling through the delivery of a number of actions linking the national agenda with local opportunities. These include contributing to the debate on single-use plastics, Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) and working collectively across Kent on communication and engagement campaigns.
- 3.4 The Strategy acknowledges the importance of our relationships with the Mid Kent partners and Kent County Council as the waste disposal authority. The benefit of working together to deliver high quality recycling to local reprocessors will only have a positive effect on the taxpayer, providing market stability and contributing to Kent’s circular economy.
- 3.5 Whilst the Strategy does not aim to deliver a significant increase to the Borough’s recycling rate, it still sets out some ambitious targets around waste reduction and recycling quality as well as looking beyond 2023 towards the new waste contract.

3.6 It is not recommended to set a more ambitious waste and recycling strategy without the commitment to restrict the amount of non-recyclable waste collected. The highest performing authorities in the Country operate similar services to Maidstone however do not have the number of communal collections. In order for Maidstone to achieve a recycling rate of over 55% it would be necessary to restrict the amount of waste collected to divert more material to recycling. The Members' workshop identified that reducing the non-recycling capacity through reduction in collections or bin capacity is not currently palatable.

4. RISK

4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The review of the previous waste and recycling strategy was discussed by the Committee in 2017 and it was agreed that it was no longer fit for purpose. The Committee agreed to a new strategy being developed and for a Member workshop to be carried out.

5.2 The workshop captured Members' views on the waste and recycling services and their aspirations for the services going forward. These views have formed the basis of the new draft strategy.

5.3 Informal feedback has also continued to be obtained from residents through roadshows. The services continue to receive positive feedback with high levels of customer satisfaction.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 If the Strategy is adopted, a public document will be produced and will be publicised through the Council's website, at events and through the press. It will provide structure to the service's communication plan and the annual service plan.

6.2 Implementation of the Strategy will start immediately through discussions with key stakeholders and an action plan will be produced.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
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Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the priority of <i>Clean, Green and Safe Environment</i> as it looks to maintain a high level of recycling, reduce overall waste arisings and take enforcement action where necessary to deal with waste offences. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Risk Management	No risks have been identified which are outside of the Council's risk appetite.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. The Strategy also looks to minimise future costs through careful forward planning and consideration of the available options.	Specialist Finance Manager
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	There is a statutory requirement to provide waste collection services under Part II of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. However as set out in the Act the Council can determine how and when waste is collected. The proposals within the Strategy are in line with this legislation and therefore there are no adverse legal implications arising from the recommendation.	Interim Team Leader (Corporate Governance) MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no specific privacy or data protection issues to address in connection with the	Interim Team Leader (Corporate

	recommendation.	Governance) MKLS
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications of this recommendation.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Procurement	There are no procurement implications of this recommendation at the present time. However the Contract Procedures will be followed when required.	Head of Environment and Public Realm

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy 2018-2023

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Waste and Recycling Strategy 2014-2019